

Section 8.

Subdivision 1. SUGGESTION AWARD PROGRAM. The Suggestion Award Program has been developed to recognize and reward City employees who contribute workable solutions for the improvement of City operations.

This program is designed to provide the opportunity and incentive for employees to submit suggestions which result in increased efficiency, improving safety and/or opportunities to save costs.

A suggestion is a well developed idea proposed in writing by an employee which clearly suggest one of the following:

- Save money
- Increase revenue
- Improve methods
- Simplify and/or streamline procedures
- Improve morale
- Improve health and safety conditions
- Improve services

Suggestions can include both:

1. The creation of new and innovative approaches
2. The application and transfer of best practices being utilized by other organizations

The awards will be divided in two major categories:

1. Safety/Health Related
2. General

1. Safety-Related: Designed to foster health and safety in the workplace.

Suggestions must be directly affecting the work environment and have a significant potential in reducing or preventing losses.

This category of suggestion will be on a **fast-track** to be reviewed as a priority.

2. General

All other suggestions will be in the general category. These will be:

- a) Cost savings
- b) Revenue generating
- c) Motivational, to improve morale
- d) Improve service or methods
- e) Increase efficiencies
- f) Simplify/streamline procedures
- g) Miscellaneous

- A) Eligibility: All City employees are eligible with exception of the management staff. Appointed and elected officials are not eligible to participate. If an employee promotes, transfers, separates or retires in good standing while the suggestion is being reviewed, the employee will remain eligible to receive the award.

A group suggestion may be submitted, the award will be distributed in equal parts to all members of the group.

Suggestions are eligible to be submitted across departments. An employee's suggestion does not have to be limited to his/her own department.

- B) Unawardable Suggestions: Suggestions which will not receive awards are those which:

- 1. Will not be implemented for any reason.
- 2. Are meet and confer matters.
- 3. Duplicate earlier suggestions which are still active.
(Suggestions are active for one year from date of receipt.)
- 4. Cannot be adopted within one year from date of submission.
- 5. Present a complaint or present a problem without a solution.
- 6. Pertain to a new City facility within the first year of occupancy; experimental installations; errors in drawings, specifications or operating rules which would normally and eventually be corrected.
- 7. Are not under the City's authority to implement.

- C) Modification of Suggestions: If, as a direct result of an employee suggestion, the City implements a modified version, the employee is still eligible for an award.

- D) Procedure to Submit a Suggestion: Suggestion forms will be available through departmental Personnel Representatives, the internal website, or the Department of Human Resources.

1. The suggestion must be clearly and completely explained on the form. Incomplete forms will be returned to sender.
2. If a group suggestion is submitted, the form must indicate the names, positions and department of all members of the group. One employee must be designated as the staff contact.
3. The form must be legible and signed by the employee or by all members of the group if more than one employee.
4. A copy must be kept by the employee(s).
5. The suggestion is submitted to the Human Resources Department.

E) Suggestion Content: It is the responsibility of the employee to provide more than a concept/idea. The suggestion must include a clear explanation of its benefit by the employee. To the extent possible, the following factors must be included in the content to determine effect and or savings of suggestion to the best of his /her knowledge :

1. Labor costs
2. Equipment or capital costs
3. Energy or fuel costs
4. Materials and supplies
5. Inflationary considerations
6. Safety/health considerations
7. Legal implications (if any identified)
8. Other miscellaneous costs

F) Procedure to Process a Suggestion: When a suggestion form is received:

1. It will be reviewed for completeness, including signature. If incomplete or unsigned, the suggestion will be returned to employee.
2. A number is assigned and the section identifying the employee(s) by name is removed and a copy is sent to employee to acknowledge receipt.
3. The original is sent along with an Evaluation Form to the appropriate department's Personnel Representative for routing to the appropriate evaluator. A copy is kept by Human Resources.
4. Safety related suggestions will be identified as "fast track" and evaluated as a high-priority.
5. The evaluator's review of the suggestion will take into consideration financial, interdepartmental impact and viability. The evaluation form must include the reasons/recommendations for adoption, modification or rejection clearly articulated.
6. Incomplete evaluation forms will be returned to the evaluator.

7. Review for all other suggestions must occur within 30 calendar days from receipt and be routed by the evaluator to the Department Director for review, recommendation and approval. Every effort should be made by the evaluator to adhere to established time guidelines.
8. Once approved by the Department Director the suggestion is returned to the Personnel Representative for routing to Human Resources. If additional time or information is needed for review, the evaluator must advise the Personnel Representative of the additional time and/or information required for review. The Personnel Representative notifies Human Resources of the delay.
9. The employee whose suggestion is delayed will be notified. If the employee makes his/her name available on the suggestion form, the evaluator can contact him/her directly.
10. The evaluation must include a recommendation to grant or not to grant an award.
11. Once the completed evaluation is received by Human Resources, the suggestion and evaluation will be sent to the Personnel Board for consideration and recommendation. Employee and evaluator will be sent a copy of the agenda in case they wish to attend the Personnel Board meeting.
12. The recommendation of the Personnel Board will be submitted to the City Manager or designee for final determination.
13. After the City Manager or designee's determination, the employee will be notified of the action and type/amount of award, if any awarded.

G) Treatment of Awards: Amounts of awards may be influenced by a number of factors including current budget. Type of award and/or amounts given are final and are not subject to appeal. Monetary awards or in-kind are considered earnings and are taxable. The amount of the award will be reported as income in the employee(s)' annual wages. In-kind awards are gift certificates for businesses operating in the City of Sunnyvale. In-kind awards are subject to availability and by the City's and the individual business' policies.

H) Monetary or In-kind Awards: Awards may be ranging from a minimum of \$50 to a maximum of \$500. The acceptance of the award will be considered full payment and the employee agrees to waive further claims. Under extraordinary circumstances a higher award may be recommended by the Director of the affected department, based on planned savings or revenue with the concurrence of the City Manager.

I) Awards for Suggestions Offering Intangible Benefits: Some suggestions may be determined to offer intangible benefits to the City because a

precise monetary value cannot be determined. In this case the Personnel Board may decide to recommend a flat minimum of \$25 or a certificate to recognize the contribution the employee has made to the organization. Safety suggestions which could prevent serious accidents may receive up to \$500. Under extraordinary circumstances a higher award may be recommended by the Director of the affected department with the concurrence of the City Manager.

- J) Rejected Suggestions: Suggestions which have been rejected may be re-submitted if changing conditions warrant it.
- K) Ownership of Suggestion: The employee will own the idea during the process of submission and review. After City Manager's determination the suggestions become the City's property; however, employee would not be prevented from patenting his/her original idea.
- L) Conditions and Agreement: The City reserves the right to amend or terminate the Suggestion Program at any time and without advanced notice, except that any suggestions submitted prior to that date will not be affected by the amendment or termination. Participating employees agree to be governed by this policy. All decisions regarding eligibility, awards and interpretation will be made by the City Manager or designee after receiving the recommendation of the Personnel Board.
- M) Implementation of Safety Suggestion: A safety suggestion can be implemented by the affected department prior to evaluation, since accidents could be prevented. Once an award is made, the department will notify the City Manager or designee when the suggestion will be implemented, if not already implemented or the reasons for non-implementation. The affected department will be responsible for evaluation, quantification and reporting of savings
- N) Implementation of General Suggestion: Prior to evaluation, the affected department can implement a general suggestion; the employee would still be eligible for an award. Once an award is made, the department will notify the City Manager or designee when the suggestion will be implemented, if not already implemented. The affected department will be responsible for the implementation of the suggestion, and for quantification and reporting of savings.